

**In the Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A network node ~~(1)~~ with comprising:

a communication unit ~~(2)~~, ~~which is provided for the implementation of a communication protocol for the purpose of communication with other network nodes via a communication medium ~~(5)~~, and with~~

a bus monitor ~~(3)~~, and

a bus driver, where

~~which,~~ the communication unit and the bus monitor each mutually independently,  
~~each implement an access time schedule contained in a configuration data record, and~~  
~~which each make available, in accordance with the access time schedule, a release signal for a~~ the bus driver (4) provided in the network node (1),

~~which the bus driver~~ evaluates these two release signals and, in the event that the two release signals do not coincide, blocks the access of the network node (1) to the communication medium (5).

2. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the communication unit ~~(2)~~ supplies, in addition, a transmission request signal to the bus driver ~~(4)~~, as a function of which the bus driver ~~(4)~~ activates its transmission stage ~~(10)~~ if no blockage of access to the communication medium ~~(5)~~ is present.

3. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the release signals of the communication unit ~~(2)~~ and the bus monitor ~~(3)~~ are coded inversely to one another.

4. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the evaluation of the two release signals is undertaken in the bus driver ~~(4)~~ under the influence of a low-pass filter ~~(7)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the low-pass filter ~~(7)~~ is of configurable design.

6. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that error-state detection generated in the bus driver (4) is resettable from the outside.
7. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that error-state detection generated in the bus driver (4) is signaled to the outside.
8. (Currently Amended) A network node as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the bus monitor (3) and the bus driver (4) are integrated into one unit.
9. (Currently Amended) A network with network nodes as claimed in claim 1, wherein the network nodes (1) communicate with each other via the communication medium (5).
10. (Currently Amended) A network as claimed in claim 9, in which redundant network channels are provided, wherein a bus monitor (3) and a bus driver (4) are assigned to each network channel in each network node (1).
11. (Currently Amended) A bus driver (4) for a network node (1), which is provided for communication with other network nodes via a communication medium (5), wherein the bus driver evaluates two release signals for equality of the release information made available to it by two separate units (2, 3) provided in the network node, which, mutually independently, each implement an access time schedule to generate the release signals, and wherein, in the event that the release signals do not coincide, the bus driver blocks the access of the network node (1) to the communication medium (5).
12. (New) A network device for communicating with other network devices over a communications medium, the device comprising:
  - a bus monitor to independently generate a release signal in response to a time schedule from a configuration data record, the time schedule specifying times at which each network device can exclusively communicate on the communications medium;

a communication circuit to independently generate another release signal in response to the time schedule, and to implement a communication protocol for communication with the other network nodes via the communication medium;

a bus driver to evaluate the independently-generated release signals and to block access to the communications medium in response to the evaluation indicating that the release signals do not coincide.

13. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the bus driver evaluates the independently-generated release signals to ensure that both signals match one another to mitigate a network access condition resulting from an improperly-generated release signal.

14. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein  
the communication circuit supplies a transmission request signal to the bus driver,  
and

the bus driver transmits over the communications medium in response to the transmission request signal and to the evaluation not indicating that the release signals do not coincide.

15. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the bus monitor and the communication circuit generate release signals that are coded inversely, relative to one another.

16. (New) The device of claim 12, wherein the bus driver includes a low-pass filter that is used to evaluate the two release signals.